

INTRODUCTION

We open this issue of the *Review* with senior editor William Murchison's essay on the confounding state of abortion politics one year before the 2008 presidential election. The announcement in November that evangelical leader Pat Robertson would endorse Rudy Giuliani, in spite of Giuliani's "personally opposed, but" stance, is indicative of how, for those who "wish for the legal overthrow of abortion," the "political terrain has been shifting"—in sometimes shocking ways. Pat Robertson said he supported Giuliani as an "acceptable Republican who can win the general election." And Murchison cites a *USA Today* poll showing Robertson is not alone: Many conservatives "of the pro-life, evangelical and God-fearing variety, so far from standing on the promises of their faith, were coming to terms with Caesar" and considering the pro-choice Giuliani, likely driven by the war on terror and fears about American security.

So what's a pro-lifer to do? There are no easy answers: Murchison writes that "for pro-life voters, 2008 poses challenges of a magnitude once only barely imaginable." Problem number one is the "sheer ongoing-ness of the stalemate over abortion: the inability of pro-life people, after so much time and expenditure of treasure, to dent seriously the status quo." Two is our war with . . . each other, as you will read. And problem number four (after number three, Hillary!) is "the defective nature of democratic politics in terms of resolving questions such as the worth of unborn human life." "Electoral politics," he reminds us, "in theory if not always in reality, is notoriously the art of compromise," but "upholders of the pro-life cause are absolutists with absolute reasons for their absolutism." Yes, because abortion is intrinsically wrong, and there ought to be no compromising on the sacredness of human life. But does that translate into throwing up our hands and disengaging from the political process?

Absolutely *not*, says Clarke Forsythe in our next article, "A Lack of Prudence." Forsythe responds here to an "open letter" published last June by a number of anti-abortion groups criticizing James Dobson, founder of Focus on the Family, and others for their "approval" of the Supreme Court's April 18th *Gonzales v. Carhart* decision upholding the constitutionality of the federal Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act. "The crux of the criticism," Forsythe writes, "seems to be that the *Gonzales* decision was 'brutally wicked,' because the Court didn't prohibit all abortions (or at least D&E abortions)." But, he argues, this open letter (which was "published for millions to read") contained "numerous misstatements" which deserve to be publicly corrected.

The virtue of prudence, Forsythe insists, ought to be employed when engaging in abortion politics. And engage we must: "Opting out" is not an option. "In the American political system of majority rule, 'opting out' of the judicial or political process merely creates or strengthens a pro-abortion majority and eliminates forms of legal or political action that challenge that pro-abortion majority." Prudence, he says, also calls for working for "a policy of legal containment of a social evil when

prohibition is not possible.” Forsythe believes that the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act is important because it “served as a legal fence . . . to keep the abortion license from expanding into out-and-out infanticide.”

Forsythe emphatically defends incrementalism, as did Paul Benjamin Linton in our last issue (“Sacred Cows, Whole Hogs & Golden Calves,” *Summer* 2007). Linton’s article provoked a response from our next author, Gregory J. Roden: “Unborn Persons, Incrementalism & the Silence of the Lambs.” Roden, while not arguing against incrementalism, does emphatically disagree with Linton’s criticism of the so-called purists’ goal of establishing the personhood of the unborn, through the Supreme Court or a constitutional amendment. Roden doesn’t see the Court establishing the personhood of the unborn as an impossible dream, as Linton does; rather, he makes the case that the “personhood” of the unborn is a concept which *already* “permeates our legal environment,” as unborn children have long been afforded rights under state and federal law which the U.S. Supreme Court has upheld (in inheritance law, for example). It was Justice Blackmun’s dishonesty about legal precedent in the *Roe* decision that “created a mirage” of non-personhood; *Roe* was a “travesty of justice” which “fabricated a history of law” so as to strip away the personhood of the unborn. Roden believes that if *Roe* were overturned, those protections that already existed for the unborn would again be effective. (Roden has written specifically about the *Roe* decision for the *Review* in “*Roe* Revisited: A Grim Fairy Tale,” *Spring* 2004, and “The Abortion Mythology of *Roe v. Wade*,” *Fall* 2005.)

We now turn from abortion politics and law to portrayals of abortion in art, specifically in fiction and film. “This Bud of Love,” by Hortense Cupo (who we welcome to our journal) is a wrenching fictional account of an abortion that is nonetheless striking in its truthfulness. A story of irrevocable loss—of innocence, and life—it is a sad tale played out all too often in reality. The tragic “choice” of abortion, as opposed to the decision to give a baby up for adoption, is also the central dilemma in the plot of the recent film *Bella*, although as Stephen Vincent writes in his glowing review, the word abortion is never uttered. *Bella* won the People’s Choice Award at the Toronto Film Festival in 2006, but as a small, independent film, its distribution prospects were shaky. Thanks to the energetic support of pro-life and faith groups across the country, however, it was picked up by a major distributor and released nationwide last October. It had a good run here in New York City—six weeks or so, just recently booted out by the holiday-season blockbusters. *Bella* is a quietly powerful and unforgettable film, as you will read in Vincent’s “*Bella* is Beautiful” (as well as in *Appendix G*, Amanda Shaw’s perfectly-pitched review, which originally appeared on the *First Things* website).

It’s impressive that *Bella* lasted in New York for as long as it did, given the cultural climate evident in the report by Alice Lemos which comes next. (Ms. Lemos is also a first-time contributor, as are the three writers who follow—we welcome them all!). Lemos attended a “panel discussion” hosted by the Society

for Ethical Culture in Manhattan titled “What’s So Bad about Abortion?”—which featured “an entirely pro-abortion panel.” The panel chair, writes Lemos, “made no pretense of being unbiased,” and the “discussion” was, as you will read, chillingly extreme, though Kristen Moore, president and CEO of the Reproductive Health Technologies Project began her talk with “pro-choicers are not extreme”! Lemos, though, sees this lack of restraint as a sign of desperation, a reaction to the turning of the tide.

Some pro-abortion women in New York, writes Professor John F. Quinn in our next article, see themselves as akin to the abolitionists: They have organized a “new underground railroad,” opening their homes for a night or more to women from other states who “come to Manhattan seeking late-term abortions.” But it is often the *opponents* of abortion who see parallels between the fight for the unborn and the fight to emancipate the slaves. In “Abolitionists’ Perspectives on Abortion,” Quinn highlights the aspect of this comparison that “anti-abortion forces have failed” thus far to publicize. “While abolitionists were of course principally focused on ending slavery and promoting racial equality, many were also involved in campaigns for women’s suffrage and temperance, and a number worked to oppose abortion and prostitution as well.” In fact, in the 1850s, while “most Americans were caught up in the increasingly rancorous debate over slavery,” a small group of doctors began what “historians have described as the ‘physicians’ crusade against abortion.” At that time, abortions before “quickening” were widely accepted; these doctors worked to reform the law to prohibit abortion at all stages except to save the life of the mother. You may be surprised, as we were, to read Quinn’s account of another movement at this time: abolitionist Henry Clarke Wright’s crusade to get husbands to “control their sensuality.” Wright “lamented that many husbands felt they had a ‘license’ to have sex whenever they wanted. Due to men’s ‘animal indulgence,’ many women were facing unwanted pregnancies. Wright feared that many of the women in turn were resorting to abortion,” which he called “child-murder.”

We turn next to another article about historical parallels, of the most disturbing kind: the “historical catalysts that preceded what later became known as the Holocaust.” In “Cultures of Death, Old and New,” Mark Mostert observes that “long before Hitler murdered the Jews, he killed tens of thousands of Germans with disabilities.” Ideas about “fatal solutions” for the disabled began in late 19th-century Europe, and “gathered critical momentum” in the early 20th century. Mostert, director of the Institute for the Study of Disability and Bioethics at Regent University, shows how wartime and economic hardship transformed people’s views about those with disabilities, making them seem burdens and even criminals. A pro-euthanasia propaganda campaign, of which the notorious film *Ich Klage an! (I Accuse)* was a part, profoundly affected the German public, to the point that parents of disabled children were begging the government to relieve them of their “burden.” Sound familiar? How about “wrongful birth” litigation? And this is Mostert’s point: One need only think of the starvation and dehydration death of Terri Schiavo, or

the deaths of the majority of unborn babies found to have Down Syndrome to see that “similar, if more subtle, problems and conditions face people with disabilities in this new century.”

Lest you think that issues discussed so far cannot apply to us currently non-disabled adults, we conclude the articles section with a valuable wake-up call. Dr. Ferdinando L. Mirarchi, medical director of the Hamot Medical Center in Erie, Pennsylvania, and Lucia Conti, the center’s Manager of Media Relations, have contributed for us life-saving information culled from Dr. Mirarchi’s book, *Understanding Your Living Will* (Addicus Books). Many people now have advance directives, specifically living wills and Do Not Resuscitate orders, as “safety” measures—but did you know that they can actually put your life in danger? The authors write that living wills had not been evaluated with respect to patient safety, and so they did the research and “uncovered serious problems, including a lack of individualization and informed consent that commonly leads to misinterpretation.” Alarming news, but read on: Mirarchi and Conti give us the requirements they believe are crucial for an *ideal* advance directive, and close communication with a physician (one you trust!) is an important component.

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Our first appendix is a companion, as it were, to our lead article by William Murchison. Hadley Arkes, writing in *First Things*, also takes as his subject “Abortion Politics 2008,” and the possibility that enough pro-lifers will be motivated by other concerns to vote for pro-choice Giuliani. But “the nomination and election of Rudolph Giuliani would mark the end of the Republican Party as the pro-life party in our politics,” and would offer bleak choices for those “concerned about the life issues.” Arkes says it’s “conceivable” that it might be better to “lose to Hillary Clinton than to win with Rudy Giuliani.”

In *Appendix B*, Bill Saunders reports on another rather terrifying prospect—the creation of human/animal hybrids. This sounds like science fiction, but “science fiction will become science fact very soon.” In England, on September 5th, a government agency “decided to let scientists, mad or otherwise, create human/animal hybrids.” And a bill will be introduced there to make this “a positive right under English law”! He answers the question “Could it happen here?”

Thankfully, there is *great* news to report from the front of the “stem-cell wars”—they’re over! As Ryan T. Anderson writes in his instructive summing-up of the war so far, “leading scientists are telling us that they can pursue the most promising research without using—much less killing—human embryos.” The new research, conducted by two separate teams of scientists, is so promising that even Ian Wilmut, the cloner of Dolly the sheep, has reportedly abandoned his plans to clone human embryos. Scientists on both sides of the wars are united in welcoming this news, as are the ethicists who spoke out against destroying embryos, proving, as Anderson writes, that “those anti-science religious fanatics who used to scold about ‘playing God’ were a media-conjured fantasy.” This new development also vindicates Presi-

dent Bush's stance, holding firm against federal funding being used to destroy embryos, as Wesley Smith remarks in *Appendix D*, "Bush Bears Fruit." Smith, who has been on the forefront of reporting on the issue of cloning and stem-cell research, writes of the President's stem-cell policy: "Even though it was politically unpopular, the President believed wholeheartedly that the raw talent, intelligence, and creativity of the science sector would find a way to obtain pluripotent cells . . . through ethical means." Smith thanks the President for his "stalwart stand," which drove research in the direction of ethical stem-cell research, and is now bearing fruit in "exciting 'alternative' methods."

Back to England, and to some people who just don't get it: In "Survival of the Stupidest," *Appendix E*, Kathleen Parker reports on the hard-to-believe story of a couple who aborted their child to "save the planet." Yes, abortion as environmentally correct—surely a new low, but as Parker writes, the Darwin Awards need a new category: "People Too Narcissistic to Procreate." It wasn't long ago that "eliminating babies to thwart global warming" was absurd, but one must always watch "the deeply caring. . . . Tenderness, it has been said, leads to the gas chambers." An interesting comment in the light of our next appendix, "The other story from a 'Pillow Angel,'" by Anne McDonald. In a story only recently made public, three years ago a severely disabled six-year-old girl was given medical treatment, at the request of her parents—and against the law—to keep her from growing and developing sexually. Ashley cannot walk, talk or feed herself; her parents said they sought this radical treatment to keep her small, so they could continue to carry her around and keep her at home. They named her their "Pillow Angel." Well, Anne McDonald is a fellow sufferer of static encephalopathy, and she once had stopped growing too, though in her case it was because of the neglect she endured in an institution. She cannot talk or walk or feed herself either: Yet she is now a normal size, graduated from university with degrees in the philosophy of science and fine arts, and is an author. Once you read her amazing story, you will understand why she believes that, even trusting in the good intentions of Ashley's parents, their treatment of their own daughter was profoundly unethical.

We close this issue with the previously-mentioned review of *Bella* by Amanda Shaw, "A Decidedly Unsappy *Bella*." Shaw writes that *Bella* is so effective because it avoids the "saccharine trap" of a happily-ever-after "chick-flick": Its ending is happy because it brings peace, "not perfection." If you have not yet seen it, stay tuned for its return to a theatre, or for the release of the DVD—a worthy purchase for you to have and also to donate to youth groups, schools, etc. We had room for a few cartoons from our friend Nick Downes, who we thank as always for sharing his delightful talents. With that we wrap up our 33rd year of publishing. As we look forward to 2008, be sure we'll be here, covering events hopeful—or not—but soldiering on in the struggle.

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